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SENATE

{ REPORT  
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## PRIVATELY OWNED LANDS WITHIN THE MORA GRANT

FEBRUARY 3 (calendar day, FEBRUARY 5), 1925.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. BURSUM, from the Committee on Public Lands and Surveys,  
submitted the following

### REPORT

[To accompany S. 3883]

The Committee on Public Lands and Surveys, to whom was referred the bill (S. 3883) providing for the acquirement by the United States of privately owned lands in San Miguel, Mora, and Taos Counties, N. Mex., within the Mora grant, and adjoining one or more national forests, by exchanging therefor timber, within the exterior boundaries of any national forest situated within the State of New Mexico or the State of Arizona, having considered the same, reports thereon favorably without amendment, and recommends it do pass.

The recommendations of the Interior Department and the Department of Agriculture are indicated by the reports submitted by them, as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
Washington, January 22, 1925.

Hon. E. F. LADD,  
*Chairman, Committee on Public Lands,  
United States Senate.*

MY DEAR SENATOR LADD: In reply to your request for report upon S. 3883, for the acquirement by the United States of privately owned lands within the Moro grant, New Mexico, by exchanging therefor timber within the exterior boundaries of national forests within the States of New Mexico and Arizona, I have to advise that this is a matter primarily for consideration by the Secretary of Agriculture, as it relates solely to national forests and privately owned lands.

If the legislation is desired by the Secretary of Agriculture, this department is aware of no objection thereto.

Sincerely yours,

HUBERT WORK, *Secretary.*

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
Washington, February 2, 1925.

Hon. E. F. LADD,

*Chairman Committee on Public Lands and Surveys,  
United States Senate.*

DEAR SENATOR LADD: I have your letter of January 24 with a request that the department submit a report upon the bill (S. 3883) providing for the acquirement by the United States of privately owned lands in San Miguel, Mora, and Taos Counties, N. Mex., within the Mora grant, and adjoining one or more national forests, by exchanging therefor timber, within the exterior boundaries of any national forest situated within the State of New Mexico or the State of Arizona.

This bill would permit the owners of private lands within the Mora grant located in the counties of San Miguel, Mora, and Taos to offer their holdings to the Government and to receive in exchange equal values of timber to be cut within the national forests of the States of New Mexico and Arizona. The values in each case are to be determined by the Secretary of Agriculture and acceptable to the grantors as fair compensation; timber to be given by the Government to be cut under laws and regulations applicable to the national forests.

Section 2 provides that lands to be conveyed to the Government not covered by public land surveys or identified by surveys of the United States shall be identified by surveys made by employees of the United States Forest Service and approved by the United States Surveyor General. Section 3 provides that the lands accepted by the United States shall become parts of either the Carson or the Santa Fe National Forest, as the Secretary of Agriculture may determine. Section 4 directs that before any exchange of lands for timber, as provided above, is executed, notice of such exchange proposal, describing the areas involved, shall be published once each week for four consecutive weeks in some newspaper of general circulation in the county in which such lands so to be conveyed to the United States are situated.

This proposed measure follows the general form of the national forest exchange act of March 20, 1922 (42 Stat. 465), and the special act of January 12, 1925 (Public No. 319, Sixty-eighth Congress), relating to the Santa Barbara grant. These acts limit the exchanges to lands or timber within the same State. The bill S. 3883 would authorize the selection of national forest timber in the State of Arizona as well as the State of New Mexico, in which the Mora grant is situated. It would also limit the Government to give in exchange only national forest timber.

The department feels that where exchanges are consummated with owners of private lands within a national forest the land or timber given therefor should be located within the same State as the offered lands, in order to maintain the same balance of taxable values. Experience has also shown that in many cases those who offer their lands in exchange would prefer to select other lands for them. The bill as now written would not permit land exchanges. It is believed, therefore, that it should be amended in these two particulars. In order to accomplish this, it is suggested that the words "to patent not to exceed an equal value of national forest land in that State or" be inserted in line 5, page 2, following the word "therefor"; that the word "therein" be inserted in line 7, following the word "forests," and that the words "of the State of New Mexico or of the State of Arizona," in lines 7 and 8, be stricken out. It is also suggested that in line 3, page 3, the word "or" be substituted for the word "for." The title should be correspondingly changed by adding the words "lands or" after the word "therefor" and by striking out "or the State of Arizona."

The Mora grant contains lands which are chiefly valuable for timber production, and their acquisition by the Government would enable the department to consolidate natural units for national forest administration. It is therefore recommended that the bill with the proposed amendments receive favorable consideration by your committee.

Sincerely yours,

HOWARD M. GORE, *Secretary.*